



08/19/2016

PennDOT, National Park Service Open New Sullivan's Bridge for Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel in Valley Forge National Historical Park

West Norriton Township, PA – PennDOT Secretary of Transportation Leslie S. Richards this morning joined the National Park Service and federal, state and local officials to open Sullivan's Bridge – the new, four-span, bicycle and pedestrian trail bridge spanning the Schuylkill River in Valley Forge National Historical Park (VFNHP).

"Sullivan's Bridge is a wonderful addition to Valley Forge National Historical Park and to the region's Circuit Trails network," Richards said. "This new trail bridge greatly enhances recreational mobility in the park and it creates a new multi-use trail connection between the park and the Schuylkill River Trail."

"We're delighted that this day has come," said VFNHP Superintendent Kate Hammond. "This month, the National Park Service is observing its 100th anniversary, and what better way than to open this wonderful bridge that will be a linchpin in connecting the park with all the people who use hundreds of miles of regional trails."

With its opening, Sullivan's Bridge becomes a critical link in the Circuit Trails, a vast regional trail network that is composed of hundreds of miles of interconnected trails in the region. The bridge's location in VFNHP further connects the Circuit Trails between Montgomery County and Chester County.

Named for Major General John Sullivan, the officer who was charged by General George Washington with building a bridge across the Schuylkill River during the 1777-78 Valley Forge winter encampment of the Continental Army, the concrete, bicycle-and-pedestrian-trail bridge is 14 feet wide and 604 feet long. The bridge features an observation area where trail users can stop midway to view the Schuylkill River and VFNHP. Construction began in March 2014.

Prior to the opening of Sullivan's Bridge, pedestrians and bicyclists crossed the Schuylkill River in this area by walking on a narrow boardwalk path on the west side of U.S. 422. This path, which was 4 feet, 6 inches wide, opened in 1994 following the closure of the Old Betzwood Bridge over the Schuylkill River in VFNHP. The Old Betzwood Bridge closed in 1993 and was removed in 1995.

In addition to building Sullivan's Bridge on the alignment of the former Old Betzwood Bridge, PennDOT's contractor replaced the nearby South Trooper Road bridge over the

Schuylkill River Trail with a 60-foot long reinforced concrete arch structure; rehabilitated the 73-foot long bridge over Norfolk Southern railroad tracks; replaced the South Trooper Road pavement with a 14-foot wide asphalt trail between Station Lane (on the south side of the river) and the Riverview entrance (on the north side of the river); and rehabilitated South Trooper Road to accommodate two 14-foot wide travel lanes between the Riverview entrance and Susan Lane.

J.D. Eckman, Inc. of Atglen, Chester County, was the general contractor on the \$9,271,458 construction project, which was financed with 100 percent federal funds.

PennDOT will transfer ownership of the right-of-way and bridges built under this project to Upper Merion Township and West Norriton Township. Under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), the National Park Service will own and maintain Sullivan's Bridge and the adjacent bridge over Norfolk Southern railroad tracks. West Norriton Township will own South Trooper Road where it's open to vehicular traffic north of the Schuylkill River and the South Trooper Road bridge over the Schuylkill River Trail.

Engineering design of the Sullivan's Bridge project was managed under a local agreement between PennDOT and the Upper Merion Transportation Authority, in close coordination with Upper Merion Township, West Norriton Township and the National Park Service.

Sullivan's Bridge is part of the Schuylkill River Crossing Complex of transportation improvement projects that are designed to enhance multi-modal travel on U.S. 422 between the Route 363 (Trooper Road) and Route 23 (Valley Forge Road) interchanges. In addition to Sullivan's Bridge, the improvements include the \$97 million project currently under construction to rebuild U.S. 422 between the two interchanges and build new, wider bridges over the Schuylkill River, Schuylkill River Trail, South Trooper Road and Norfolk Southern railroad tracks; the recent opening of two additional ramps built to complete the U.S. 422/Route 363 (Trooper Road) Interchange; and the relocation of North Gulph Road at Route 23 (Valley Forge Road) in VFNHP, which is expected to move to construction in 2019.

For more details on improvements being made along the U.S. 422 Corridor, visit www.422improvements.com.

Motorists can check conditions on more than 40,000 roadway miles by visiting www.511PA.com. 511PA, which is free and available 24 hours a day, provides traffic delay warnings, weather forecasts, traffic speed information and access to more than 770 traffic cameras.

For more PennDOT information, visit www.penndot.gov. Follow Local PennDOT Information on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/511PA Philly](https://twitter.com/511PA Philly), and follow the department on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pennsylvaniadepartmentoftransportation and Instagram at www.instagram.com/pennsylvaniadot.

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